

REMARKS

The Applicants request reconsideration of the rejection.

Claims 21-24 are now pending.

New independent claim 21 corresponds to claim 1, as finally rejected, but includes the steps of providing an interface for setting a threshold value for said inclusion degree and a threshold value for said similarity; and displaying only those object documents in the form of a list of search results that satisfy both of or one of said threshold value. By these steps, claim 21 clearly distinguishes the claimed invention from Numata, U.S. Patent No. 5,943,669 (Numata), Mohan et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,970,881 (Mohan), and Yadav et al., U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0186828 (Yadav), which were applied in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) with respect to claim 1. More particularly, none of these references, or any of the other references of record, discloses or fairly suggests a method in which both the similarity of a document and the inclusion degree of relevant blocks within both the seed text and the searched text are employed to determine not only the similarity of the seed text to the searched text, but also the degree to which the relevancy of certain characteristic strings in the searched text are to the characteristic strings extracted from the seed text. According to this feature of the invention, it becomes possible to determine not simply the degree to which a searched document is locally relevant to a seed text, but also the degree to which the overall searched text is to the seed text.

In other words, when the similarity or coincidence degree is high and the inclusion degree is also high, the searched object document is considered to be quite relevant to the seed text. When the similarity is high but the inclusion degree is

low, the object document is considered to be locally relevant, but to generally have subject matter of low relevance to the seed text. When the similarity is low but the inclusion degree is high, there is considered to be low relevancy locally throughout the object document, although the object document is considered to be generally relevant. Finally, when both the similarity and the inclusion degree are low, there may be only low local relevance.

Independent claim 22 is similar to claim 21, but recites a document search system having an interface for setting a threshold value for the inclusion degree and a threshold value for the similarity, and an output module that outputs for display only those object documents in the form of a list of search results that satisfy both of or one of the threshold values.

New independent claim 23 recites a document search method that is similar to claim 1 but includes steps of providing an interface for setting sort keys with respect to said inclusion degree and said similarity; and re-sorting values in the list of object documents based on a selected key. These steps also distinguish Numata, Mohan and Yadav, however combined, such that the rejection of claim 1 is overcome.

New system claim 24 is similar to method claim 23, but recites the providing and re-storing functions as being performed, respectively, by an interface and an output module. Accordingly, claim 24 is also patentably distinguishable from Numata, Mohan, and Yadav.

This combination of references was also used to reject claims 3-4, 6-7, 9-10, 16 and 18-19, but in view of the cancellation of these claims, the rejection is moot. Further, the rejection of claims 12-15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable

over Numata, Mohan, Yadav and Caudill et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,766,316 (Caudill) is also moot. No admission as to the propriety of the rejection of these claims is made. The cancellation thereof is believed to advance prosecution by focusing consideration on the new independent claims.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicants request reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of the claims.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of Mattingly, Stanger, Malur & Brundidge, P.C., Deposit Account No. 50-1417 (referencing attorney docket no. 500.43154X00).

Respectfully submitted,

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